

It's a Date

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It's a Date

by [KivaEmber](#)

Summary

Goro stared at his reflection in dismay. It didn't compare to Akira, but at least he looked like he put *some* effort in. Fine, his rival can have the win in presentation, but this competition was just getting started. Goro will sweep him off his feet and turn him into a blushing, stammering mess by the end of the night.

He will ***not*** lose.

or;

Only Akira and Akechi would turn a date into a competition.

Notes

See the end of the work for [notes](#)

The first mistake was Akira saying a very hopeful and heavily meaningful '*it's a date*' to Akechi. Both parties misunderstood the intention of the phrase.

The second mistake was Akira texting Ann immediately afterwards: '*what's good to wear on a first date?*'

The third mistake was...

Actually, let's get into that one.

"I don't see why this isn't acceptable."

"You don't wear a *suit* to a date, Makoto! That... really gives off a weird intention, you know?"

"Hey, how about this?"

Akira looked up in a blank sort of daze at Ryuji. Having returned from his deep-dive into the colourful clothes racks, Ryuji flaunted his spoils: a bright red tank top with the word '*JUICY*' emblazoned across the chest and matching shorts. The shorts also said '*JUICY*' across the back with a picture of a peach taking up the entire ass.

Ann stared at Ryuji with a pitying look, "...no."

As Ryuji complained at the cold rejection, Akira briefly entertained the thought of surprising Akechi with that highly provocative outfit.

i think it might kill him, he concluded.

"I have returned with something far more suitable," Yusuke proclaimed, inserting himself quite forcefully between Ryuji and Ann and holding up his offering as if to an overbearing deity, "Behold! Does this not inspire passion? When worn, it transforms the person into an object of desire, snatching the gazes of all who look upon-"

"No," Ann said firmly, taking the clothes away from Yusuke. It was a mesh shirt and something that looked too tight to be called just pants, "Definitely not."

Makoto coughed lightly, "Maybe we should ask Akira what he thinks...?"

"I don't think mesh and leather pants are my style," Akira said honestly.

Ann gave him an approving nod.

Makoto looked faintly exasperated, "No, not the... not that. I mean, what do *you* think you should wear, Akira?"

Akira fidgeted when he became the focus of his friends, watching Ann haphazardly put away the rejected clothes on a random rack. When he texted her, he thought he would just get some new jeans, something a bit nicer than what he had, but somehow everyone else got involved and now he wasn't sure *what* he should be wearing. Akechi should be fine with his usual outfit, right?

but this is a date, a first one, i think, and i need to make a good impression? Akira thought to himself, horribly uncertain.

"What's wrong with what he has on now?" Morgana grumbled from the Mona bag, his head popping up over Akira's shoulder, "I think he looks fine."

"Oh, Mona," Ann sighed, "You can't just wear everyday clothes to a *first date*."

"No, I think Mona's onto something," Makoto said quickly, "Akira already has a 'style', right? His date must like that already, so we shouldn't change it up too much."

Ann paused at that, tapping her bottom lip as she looked Akira up and down. He tried not to feel self-conscious, "Oh, yeah, I see what you mean."

"Yes..." Yusuke held up his hands, making a picture frame with his fingers. His gaze was downright penetrating, "To maintain his current style, but refine it. I see!"

"Huh?" Ryuji said, echoing Akira's thoughts.

"Let's go," Ann said, grabbing Akira's wrist and hauling him to the dressing rooms. The rest of the group followed like obedient ducklings, whereupon Ann marshalled them into important tasks such as: *'get me black shirts, nice jeans - nothing ripped, Ryuji! - and smart coats, and keep it in a nice price range, Makoto!'*

Akira felt a bit out of his depth.

"Don't worry," Ann said as the Phantom Thieves scattered to do her bidding, and claimed a dressing room stall for their purposes, "By the time we're done, you'll be a real snack. I'll cover the costs too. Think of it as a reeeearly early birthday present!"

"Wow! You're so kind, Lady Ann!" Mona gushed, and Akira felt his face warm, genuinely touched.

"You sure?" he asked quietly, "It, er, won't be cheap, right?"

"Sure I'm sure," Ann's answering grin was equal parts fond and pleased, "It's not every day I get to dress my friends up for something important like this."

"First dates are important, huh?"

"Of course they are," Ann flicked her pigtail over her shoulder, "I mean, um, you seem really nervous about it. This date, I mean. So, I want to help out."

Ann clasped her hands behind her back and leaned forwards, a little into Akira's personal space. He made himself stay still, waiting patiently as Ann scrutinised his face. After a long moment, she reached out to gently remove his glasses.

"You have really pretty eyes," she said, her tone matter of fact, like she was discussing the aesthetics of an attractive vase, "So, I think we should use a little bit of makeup to accentuate that. Not too much, though."

Akira blinked again, rapidly.

"Pretty eyelashes too," Ann groaned, leaning back and keeping hold of his glasses, "I'm so *jealous!*"

"Sorry?" Akira offered, smiling sheepishly.

"It's *fine*. I'll just have to envy you from afar," Ann folded up the glasses and tucked them on the lapel of her jacket, "I'm keeping a hold of these, since you won't be wearing them on your date."

"Huh?"

"You're showing off, not hiding!" Ann mock-scolded him, "So, I need to find something that matches your face without the glasses."

Akira's stomach did a nervous flop at that. There was a weird edge of intimacy about that, turning up to his date without glasses - Akechi would definitely notice that, wouldn't he? He noticed a lot of things that others missed with Akira. Still, he didn't protest, and submitted himself to Ann's mercy when the rest of the Phantom Thieves returned with a whole pile of outfits to try.

One hour later, where Akira felt like he was in a one-man runway show with the Phantom Thieves as the panel of judges, Ann was eventually satisfied with an outfit. It didn't seem anything special to Akira; a plain black shirt with a nice set of blue denim jeans, topped off with a close cut coat more suited to a chilly autumn than the beginning of summer. But when he walked out of the changing room and awkwardly posed (Ann and Yusuke both insisted on the posing), everyone gave their universal approval of the attire.

(Though at this point Akira was beginning to suspect Ryuji and Makoto would have approved of anything just to escape. They didn't possess Ann's unflagging stamina for clothes shopping).

"Sooooo? We're all in agreement?" Ann said, moving to stand next to Akira like a proud mother flaunting her well-dressed child. She flung her arms out to dramatically indicate him; "*This* is the outfit?"

"Oh, yeah, totally," Ryuji said, looking up from his phone to give Akira a quick once over, "Looks good to me."

“Very handsome,” Makoto agreed, looking a little flustered about delivering such a blunt compliment.

“Looking good, Joker!” Morgana complimented from his cosy spot atop of the rejected clothes pile.

Yusuke was kneeling like he was a devoted cameraman in a photoshoot, fingers creating a window view as he gazed at Akira through them, “Yes... yes, this is it! This is the casual confidence needed to fan those embers of infatuation! This is, indeed, *The Outfit!*”

Akira fidgeted with his fringe, his face feeling hot but unable to fight down the shy little smile at the overwhelming show of support. Really, he’d been nervous... he hadn’t told them his date was with *Akechi*, but he had told them it was a guy (tentatively, and he was sure he failed to hide his nervousness at such a confession), and their eagerness to help him with making a good first impression had him feeling so overwhelmed he was a little choked up.

Ann squealed, “Oh! Akira! Your date’s gonna want to *eat you up!* If he doesn’t, then he’s a jerk who doesn’t deserve you.”

“Let’s not jump to that possibility so quickly,” Makoto sighed, before giving Akira an encouraging smile, “I’m sure he will love it.”

God, Akira sure hoped so. He spent his entire morning picking it out (well, Ann did but, you know what he meant).

Ann quickly ushered him back into the stall to get changed so she could pay for the outfit, while Yusuke and Makoto were roped into returning the rejected clothes to their racks. As Akira untangled himself from the shirt, Ryuji casually asked through the changing stall’s curtain: “So, where is it you said you were going for your date again?”

“Huh? Oh,” Akira answered distractedly as he folded up the shirt; “We’re going to a jazz club in Kichijoji tomorrow night.”

“Cool.”

Akira didn’t think anything of that question. That was the aforementioned third mistake.

On date night, Akira spent forty minutes on his hair. It didn’t cooperate.

“Maybe you should just leave it?” Morgana suggested gently as Akira ruffled it back into a somehow messier bird’s nest.

“Ngh,” Akira replied, staring unhappily at his reflection. He was in the clothes Ann picked out for him, sans the coat, and his face looked uncomfortably exposed without his large glasses to hide behind. Ann was coming round in a bit to do his makeup, but he thought he could use his initiative and scrape his hair back stylishly or something but...

He pulled his fingers through his hair, wincing when he hit several snarls. He really messed it up.

Rapid footsteps on the attic stairs had him jumping from his desk mirror like he'd been scalded, standing stiffly in the centre of his room as Ann entered, holding up her makeup bag like it was the holy grail.

"I have arriv- oh, wow," Ann lowered her makeup bag, boggling at the now red-faced Akira, "What did you do to your *hair*?"

"He was styling it," Morgana snitched, like the furry traitor that he was.

Ann pursed her lips together, very clearly holding back laughter. Akira appreciated the effort, "O-Oh, well. Uh, let's see what we can do with that!"

With that, Ann took control of the situation. She ushered Akira onto the chair he used to pull up training, dumping the makeup bag on the desk and rummaging in it. She withdrew a comb and some other mysterious bottles, giving him an impish smile when he made a questioning noise.

"To be honest, there was something I wanted to try with your hair," Ann admitted, "You'll see it when I'm done."

Akira eyed her nervously, but when it came to fashion, he trusted her.

Then Ann attacked him with the comb.

It was.

Well.

It was an *experience*.

Morgana watched sympathetically from the sidelines as Ann bullied Akira's hair into compliance at the cost of two combs and tears from both sides. Once she gained the upper hand, she styled his hair into something similar to its usual mess, but just a little neater, the left side slicked back behind his ear, his fringe coaxed a little more to the right.

"There!" Ann said with vicious satisfaction, "I've won."

"... I'm glad," Akira coughed out, fighting the urge to rub his poor abused scalp and ruin all of her hard work, "Is that it?"

"Not yet, it's makeup time now."

Well, the makeup should be less painful, right? Akira watched nervously as Ann delved into her bag of horrors and withdrew more small bottles, pots and a tube. She turned to him with a critical eye, then back to her bag, putting some things away and taking other things out. The professional scrutiny actually helped Akira slowly relax, fidgeting with his hands until Ann was satisfied with what she needed.

"So," Ann began when she started with what he tentatively guessed to be light foundation (he wasn't, admittedly, a makeup expert); "You excited?"

“Mm, yeah.”

“He’s nervous,” Morgana piped up, “He’s been fussing all day.”

Akira tried not to frown, “I haven’t.”

“That’s cute,” Ann giggled, “But normal! I mean, it seems you really like this guy...”

“Mm.”

“Okay, let’s see... alright. It’s focus time!”

The next few moments went by surprisingly quick. It was a little strange to have Ann so close to him, right up in his personal space but not actually *be* her focus. It was even stranger to have makeup applied on him, but when she was done with a proud little noise and showed off her hard work, Akira had to admit that the strangeness of it was definitely worth it. Even he could admit he looked nice.

“Like it?” Ann asked him, but didn’t wait for a response, “I do. You look so handsome- doesn’t he look handsome, Mona?”

“Really handsome!” Morgana agreed quickly, his tail swishing from side to side, “You look even cooler now, Joker.”

Ann clapped her hands together with a grin, uncaring of the smudges of makeup clinging to her fingers. “Ooooh, I have to take a picture. *Please* can we take a picture?”

Akira felt himself flush, but he agreed with a small nod, rising from his seat as Ann got out her phone. A few shyly awkward poses later, and his friend was satisfied, doing a few quick adjustments here and there on his outfit before she deemed him Ready.

“It’s almost time to go, isn’t it?” Ann said, checking her phone, “When did you say you’d meet up with him?”

“Uh, about seven,” Akira checked his phone too. He had about an hour, but he might as well turn up early. He’d get the jitters sitting around here any longer, “So, yeah, I should go now.”

“I’ll walk with you to the station,” Ann said, picking up her bag, “You coming, Mona?”

“Yes, Lady Ann!”

They meandered down the stairs after Akira pulled on his coat. Sojiro did a double take when he caught sight of him, his eyebrows rising before his expression smoothed out into something very wryly amused.

“What’s this?” Sojiro asked in a tone that implied he knew perfectly well what *this* was, “Are you going out on a date?”

“Yup, he is!” Ann answered for Akira, sensing he had been struck mute with acute embarrassment, “Doesn’t he look great?”

“You did a good job,” Sojiro praised, correctly assuming Ann was responsible for Akira cleaning up, “But, hey, remember not to stay out too late, you hear? And don’t go bringing anyone back-”

“It’s a first date,” Akira quickly blurted, very sharply slamming the brakes on *those* thoughts before he melted into Leblanc’s floors.

Sojiro’s expression said that didn’t matter.

“Okay! Let’s go!” Ann said quickly, pushing Akira forwards and out the door, “See you later, Boss!”

The night air was a little cool when they rushed out into Yongen-jaya’s backstreets. Ann linked their elbows together, Morgana trotting at her side as they made their slow, ambling way towards the train station. With each step, Akira could feel his nerves start to hike up again, which was stupid because it was just hanging out with Akechi, which he had done many times before, but never in a ‘date’ framework.

should it be any different? He worried to himself, *except maybe we might have to kiss at the end. i should have brought mints.*

Ann bumped her hip against his, “It’ll go fine.”

“I’m not worried.”

“Uh huh,” Ann gave him a flat look, “Sure you’re not.”

Akira ducked his head a little, fighting the urge to fiddle with his hair as he admitted quietly; “I’m a *little* worried.”

“Well,” Ann chewed on her bottom lip for a moment, “*Well*, if it starts turning into a big disaster and you need an out, just text me and I’ll call you. I can, like, pretend to be your dying grandmother or something.”

Akira laughed, finding some of his nerves vanishing at imagining *that*, “My dying grandmother?”

“Or maybe I could pretend to be Boss,” Ann’s smile gained a wicked edge, deepening her voice into a hilarious parody of Sojiro’s rough voice, “Hey, Leblanc’s floors need mopping! Stop making googly eyes at that young man and come back here!”

They laughed loudly at that, and Akira felt the last of his tension bleeding away.

“Maybe I can come with you, Joker,” Morgana piped up when their giggles faded, “If you’re *really* worried.”

“No, that’s okay, Mona,” Akira said, “I mean, I *do* want to hang out with him, with just us. I guess I’m worried I’ll mess it up somehow.”

“You? Mess up?” Morgana sniffed, as if such a thought was incomprehensible, “Nah.”

“I think your date’ll be too dazzled to care if you mess up,” Ann said, “By the way, you still haven’t given us a name...”

Akira’s heart skipped a little, and he mumbled; “I wanna wait until, you know...”

Ann gave him a look, but she thankfully dropped it.

They reached the train station, and Ann gave him one last pat down to make sure everything was perfect. She kissed him on the cheek for good luck, and Akira boarded the train to Morgana and Ann shouting enthusiastic and supportive farewells. Akira felt himself smile as he carefully navigated the train to find a seat, his nerves briefly settled by the affection he felt for his friends.

Goro sighed as he eased into his chair, allowing himself a moment to slouch and crack his neck as the quiet peace of the club buzzed around him. Today was an exhausting day. With Kaneshiro in police custody and having confessed to his myriad of crimes, Shido was pitching random tantrums, summoning Goro to deliver somewhat confusing rants about a god’s will and ruin, or shoving more and more jobs onto him in a demented sort of damage control. With both Madarame and Kaneshiro out of the picture, Shido’s ship was springing several expensive leaks.

no rest for the wicked, Goro thought tiredly, roughly combing his fingers through his hair.

He was a little less put together tonight, but he was slowly learning he could be a *little* laid back around Akira. While he was a dangerous rival and not someone to lower his guard around, Goro could admit doing just that. It was just... so easy. Akira gazed at him without judgement or expectation, didn’t care if he was impeccably dressed or looked as if he just rolled out of bed. He didn’t engage in the inane gossip that circled him constantly, and when he listened, he *listened*. Goro’s mask slipped more and more every day.

He was... comfortable, to be around. Goro wasn’t sure how to feel about this lazy, warm feeling that coiled behind his sternum whenever Akira agreed to meet up with him. Whether it be here, or the aquarium, or even playing inane games at the arcade, that little warm feeling grew more and more until Goro was dangerously coveting it.

Ah, his innate selfishness was really biting him in the ass here, but Goro was certain he could handle it. There may, in fact, be a way he can have his cake and eat it too, if he succeeded in a few things.

Goro took out his phone, absently checking the time before sweeping through his messages. Shido, Shido, *Shido*, Okumura, oh why was that shitstain messaging him directly, TV station, Shido, Akira...

Goro smiled without thinking the second he saw his rival’s name.

Speaking of his rival...

The table Goro chose was closest to the jazz singer's stage in the rear corner, but it offered a near complete view of the club's interior. He liked being able to see his whole surroundings, back to the wall, etcetera, so he easily glimpsed when Akira arrived in his peripheral. Goro quickly stowed his phone, turning to look at his approaching rival properly with a friendly; "Kurusu..."

He didn't quite get the 'kun' out.

Akira looked... well, he *looked something*, like he had just strolled off a model's runway and into the club. His hair was styled, his cute yet obscuring glasses gone, and Akira's expression as he paused next to his usual seat was an enticing combination of shy and hopeful, his lowered gaze drawing fatal attention to his dark eyelashes.

fhgghf? Goro's brain squeaked.

"Hi," Akira said, quickly tucking a wayward lock of hair back behind his ear before sitting down, body slightly angled towards him, "I'm... guessing your stunned silence means you like it?"

It took Goro an embarrassing few seconds to regain the ability to speak, "I- yes? Ah, I mean, yes, you look..." his brain quickly zipped through several compliments while at the same time trying to comprehend what the hell was going on. Akira wasn't *slovenly* but he rarely put in this amount of effort into his appearance, like he was trying to impress or off on a-

...

...on a... on a *date*.

He had an abrupt flashback to Akira's call yesterday ("*it's a date, right?*") and felt an embarrassment so acute he thought he was going to perish on the spot. Oh. *Oh*. He thought it had been a turn of phrase not a- confirmation of- *oh*.

Wait, his pause was dragging on too long. Akira's expression was becoming increasingly guarded at the silence.

"You look amazing, Kurusu-kun," Goro murmured, swiftly salvaging his composure and the situation, while his mind frantically outlined a battle plan. Right, date. Fine, this is a date. *Fuck*, this was a *date*. One that Akira was clearly winning, judging by his outfit and- damn, his happy smile at being complimented was *dangerously effective*. Goro heroically did not get dazzled by it.

(okay, he was a little dazzled by it, but he quickly looked away and played with his hair in semi-feigned bashfulness in an attempt to centre himself. *Focus*, fool!)

Right, Akira had the advantage here. Drop dead gorgeous and delicious enough to eat, and Goro hadn't even bothered putting on makeup or properly brushed his hair before coming here. This couldn't stand. Goro refused to be thought of as someone who half-assed their appearance on a *date*.

He launched his counter-attack.

“I’m sorry, I hadn’t expected you to arrive so early,” Goro said, turning to him with a faint air of not-so-faked embarrassment, “So, I was caught a little off guard as I am not quite... ready yet. Do you mind if I go to the bathroom for a quick moment?”

Akira cocked his head curiously, and for one terrifying moment Goro was braced for him to call him out. Instead, Akira gave a crooked grin and said, “Sure. I’ll order us drinks?”

“Yes, please,” Goro stood up, grabbing his briefcase in the same movement, “You know what I like, yes?”

“Mhm.”

With that out of the way, Goro beat a tactical retreat.

He *very calmly* entered the bathroom and claimed a sink for himself, resting his briefcase on the edge and popping it open. He barely kept a few papers and folders from sliding out, roughly rummaging through until he found his small emergency makeup bag. Mostly to hide the evidence of sleepless nights and the like, but now it will serve a greater purpose.

Thankfully it was just him in the bathroom, but knowing that will swiftly change at any moment, Goro fixed his face. Cover up those eyebags there - ugh, it was so obvious he hadn’t slept well over the past few days - a bit of colour in his cheeks, and did he have- oh thank fuck, he did have mascara, good, alright, he can never rival Akira’s *unfairly perfect eyelashes* but he can come a close fucking second, damn it, and eyeliner, did he have- shit, no, okay, fine he can deal with that, and topped off with lipbalm...

Goro scrutinised his face once he was done, huffing in dissatisfaction. Not his best work, but it would have to do. His scrutiny turned to his hair, but he dismissed it as he took in his outfit instead. He couldn’t really *do* much about it, but maybe...

He removed the sweater vest, taking care not to smudge his work on his face, haphazardly folding it up and cramming it into his briefcase (it just about closed). Puffing his forelock out of his eyes, he unbuttoned his collar, rolled up the sleeves of his shirt, and gave it a few tugs here and there, achieving stylish dishevelment that made him look handsome without trying too hard. There, better.

God, he was feeling uncomfortably hot now. Mentally willing himself not to sweat and ruin his concealer, he scraped his fingers through his hair, playing around with making it look a little dishevelled, hating it, ruffling it, before finally settling on brushing it as neatly as he could with his fingers and leaving it at that.

Well, this was all he could do.

Goro stared at his reflection in dismay. It didn’t compare to Akira, but at least he looked like he put some effort in. Fine, his rival can have the win in presentation, but this competition was just getting started. Goro will sweep him off his feet and turn him into a blushing, stammering mess by the end of the night.

He will *not* lose.

Akira sipped his drink, fighting back the nerves trying to clamber up his throat. He had been surprised to see Akechi hadn't dressed up, but he *was* early - and he did look tired. Maybe Akechi had been planning on catching his breath before getting changed? He probably had his outfit in his briefcase or something...

He saw a glimpse of movement in his peripheral, and he looked up to see Akechi slide back into his seat.

Akira almost choked on his drink.

Akechi didn't look *different*, exactly, but he looked less drained, his face clearly touched up with makeup. The sweater vest was gone, and his shirt collar was popped open, the top two buttons undone, letting Akira get a nice glimpse of his collarbones, and his sleeves were rolled up, showing off strong looking forearms that reminded Akira, abruptly, that Akechi did bouldering in his spare time.

well toned muscles, something gibbered stupidly in his brain.

In short, Akechi cleaned up *nice*, and the way he leaned against the table, propping his head up with an upturned palm, dark eyelashes lowered as he smiled at him sultrily, made Akira's stomach do several medically unhealthy flips. Akira somehow managed to put his drink down without spilling it all down his front.

"Uh," Akira reached up to fidget with his fringe, realised he couldn't because it was styled, and pretended to tuck a lock of hair behind his ear instead. His face felt stupidly hot, "You look nice."

"Just nice?" Akechi hummed, humour clear in his voice.

"More than nice," Akira quickly added, and twiddled his thumbs. Akechi's gaze was slowly scrutinising every inch of him, *checking him out*, and Akira fought the urge to fidget and huddle. Akechi seemed to like what he was seeing though, and that helped Akira grasp onto Joker's impenetrable confidence, straightening up in his seat and peeking over at Akechi from beneath his eyelashes.

"You make it look effortless," Akira admitted, and gestured to himself, "This is from two days of hard work."

Akechi huffed out a laugh, "Surely you're exaggerating."

"I'm being serious," Akira felt himself relax, leaning towards Akechi slightly, "After our call, I texted Ann to help me pick out an outfit. It took *all day*, though, that was probably because everyone was picking out weird stuff."

An idea flickered in Akira's mind, and he took out his phone, opening up the gallery, "For example, Ryuji's juicy shorts."

Akechi looked like he wasn't sure if he wanted to know, but he obligingly leaned in to look at Akira's phone. So close that Akira could smell his cologne, something sweet and faint, almost floral, rather than the heavy musk most cologne came in. Akira found himself turning to look at Akechi more than his phone, fighting the urge to sniff him like a weirdo as his rival let out an amused (and slightly undignified) snort.

"I despair for Sakamoto-kun's tastes," Akechi laughed, leaning back and away, hiding his mouth behind his hand, "Though..."

"Though?" Akira prompted, letting his phone rest on the table between them. Akechi was looking at him, *looking*, with a very intense gaze that made Akira's pulse jump erratically, hyperconscious of the way his rival's gaze dipped downwards, lingering somewhere around Akira's waist.

"You might have been able to pull it off," Akechi hummed, "You could hardly be called *publicly* decent, but..."

"Are you saying you would like to see me in short shorts that say 'juicy' on the back, Akechi?" Akira asked teasingly.

Akechi didn't reply. Just gave him a look that was delightfully mischievous and inviting.

This was a side of Akechi that Akira had always glimpsed but never seen full on like this. He suddenly felt very hot, very exposed, in their little corner of the club, his focus wavering between Akechi's smiling mouth, the tempting 'v' of his unbuttoned shirt, his dark eyes and- well, lots of other things. Akira felt overwhelmed, but it wasn't necessarily a bad feeling just- a lot. It was a lot at that point.

But there was relief too. There had been a growing tension between them in the last few outings they had, one Akira hadn't been able to put a name to, but now it was gone, and Akira found himself being so easily and willingly pulled under the thrall of Akechi's slightly crooked, impish smile, so unlike the plastic cheeriness of his Detective Prince persona. He was seeing under the mask, *completely*, an Akechi that looked at him like he was carefully selecting which part of him he wanted to devour first.

Akira felt a bit dizzy from it.

"You're staring," Akechi murmured, a faint edge of a purr to his voice.

Akira jolted upright, heat rushing to his face, "Oh. Sorry, I-"

Akechi chuckled, cutting him off, "It is fine, Kurusu-kun. Or... Akira?"

Oh, ohh fuck, fuck-

"Akira," he repeated dumbly, and quickly played it off by adding, "That's fine. Yeah."

Akechi tilted his head a little, blinking, "You don't sound too enthused."

“I guess I’m used to hearing ‘*Kurusu-kun*’ from you,” Akira said, imitating Akechi’s voice for his name... while giving it a slight cutesy twist, “You make it sound, mm, cute?”

Akechi blinked again, looking slightly off-guard, before he shook his head with a small laugh.

“You are an intriguing one, *Kurusu-kun*, ” Akechi murmured his name in a decidedly *not cute* way. Oh, nope. Not cute at all. Akira felt his toes *curl* at that low, rumbling voice purring over the syllables of his name, and he must’ve made some sort of expression because Akechi’s eyes *lit up* with a dark sort of satisfaction.

Wait-

“Oh?” Akechi’s voice dripped with mock-innocence, “Was it not *cute* that time, *Kurusu-kun*?”

And it was like an epiphany delivered with the force of a thunderbolt, Akira’s lips parting as he stared at Akechi and thought ‘*this is a competition.*’

It was that satisfaction now lingering around Akechi like a cloak that gave it away, the same subtle smugness he had when he won their arcade games, or at chess - this date was another competition, except the battlefield was different and Akira was slightly late to the initial charge. Any normal person would’ve felt offended at that realisation, probably, but with Akira he felt his confidence come rushing to the fore with a vengeance.

Flirting with Akechi and being emotionally vulnerable: scary, really scary. Winning an impromptu flirting competition and seeing who cracks first: thrilling, really thrilling.

Akira, finally, launched his opening attack.

“No, it sounded *sexy* that time,” he said bluntly, leaning against the table and hitching up Joker’s smile. He was rewarded with Akechi looking briefly wrong footed, “Hey, can you say ‘Akira’ like that?”

Akechi paused - Akira could practically see his mind adjust his strategy from this sudden shift - before he indulged in his demand with a low, softer, “Akira.”

Oh, that sounded nice. It wasn’t a sultry purr, but something gentler. Akira briefly bit his bottom lip to make himself focus.

“Again,” Akira demanded, leaning in a bit more, his voice huskier, “Please.”

There was a faint flush of colour to Akechi’s cheeks. His eyes were a little darker, dilated in the low light of the club. Akechi leaned in too, mirroring him, his voice barely audible as he repeated, in that same soft tone; “Akira.”

“Goro,” Akira said back, mimicking that soft, intimate tone perfectly. He was blessed when Akechi’s breathing audibly *hitched*, a full-body shiver overtaking him.

“Did you like that?” Akira asked sweetly, not bothering to hide his grin when Akechi’s cheeks started to turn *pink*, “Goro~?”

Akechi leaned back, a tactical retreat which spoke volumes, and picked up his drink, “Ah, yes. It was adequate.”

Akira felt a thrill of victory at that. He had reclaimed some vital ground. He pushed his advantage as Akechi sipped his drink.

“You don’t sound too enthused,” he said mildly.

Akechi lowered his drink, his gaze flicking to the side before settling back on him again, “It was... just surprising to hear it.”

“Don’t hear it from others often?”

“No, I don’t,” Akechi admitted quietly, his expression briefly unreadable. Something almost wistful and melancholy- but it was gone, and he was back to smiling coyly at him from beneath his eyelashes.

“Coming from *you*, however... I might need to hear it again, to decide on my feelings.”

Oh?

“How do you want me to say it?” Akira asked curiously, “All sexy like or?”

“Go with what feels right. ”

Akira wetted his lips, holding Akechi’s gaze. His cheeks were still pink, his bottom lip damp from the drink, and Akira had the fleeting, yet near overwhelming urge to lean in and kiss him.

that might be going a bit too fast, Akira told himself faintly.

“Goro,” he said, something coiling warm and low in his belly when Akechi’s breathing hitched again, “*Goro*. ”

Akechi cleared his throat, looking away, “Ah, that’ll do, Akira.”

Akira leaned in instead, his heart picking up at hearing his name so easily pass Akechi’s lips. It wasn’t as cute as his *Kurusu-kun*, but there was something - else, more intimate, about it, that made him want to get up and run. In a good way. Bad way? He wasn’t sure.

Again, it was overwhelming.

“Hey, look at me, Goro.”

As if enthralled, Akechi looked back at him. His pupils were fully dilated.

fuck, Akira thought, *i really wanna kiss him*.

He could feel his heart thump against his sternum as he edged that little bit closer, deaf to the sound of his chair scraping against the floor from the movement. His knee bumped against Akechi's, and they were close enough that Akira could see the flecks of colour in Akechi's irises, unable to tell if they leaned more towards red or brown. Akira reached out, brushed the hair from those eyes, and again that full-body shiver wracked Akechi's body, a soft, muted noise catching in his throat.

"Goro," Akira murmured, and it came out soft, and warm, and made his heart feel like it was about to pop as he leaned in-

And his phone buzzed loudly against the table, intrusive and jarring.

They both jumped, the moment obliterating in that panicked half-second. Akechi sat ramrod straight in his seat, staring somewhere just past Akira's shoulder like he had just realised he narrowly avoided an execution, his cheeks a bright scarlet. Akira felt the same, fumbling with his phone when it buzzed a few more times as his earlier courage crashed and burned into a thousand million pieces.

It was Ryuji.

THE LAW ABIDING STUDENTS CLUB

Ryuji: hey u doin alrite?

Ryuji: kissed him yet?

Ann: DONT TEXT HIM HES ON A DATE!!!!

Akira fought the urge to dump his phone in his drink, groaning quietly as he put it on *silent* and stuffed it back into his pocket.

"Sorry," he said, rubbing the back of his neck, unable to look Akechi in the face as he bit his bottom lip hard enough to make it sting, "Uh, I should've... put that on silent."

"...that's alright," Akechi said after a pause, and gave himself a bit of a shake. His face wasn't as red, but he also wasn't looking Akira in the face, fidgeting with his drink before taking in a short breath, "Well."

Akechi looked up, scanning the club before smiling crookedly.

"That was, mm..." Akechi glanced at him, something wry in his gaze.

"Embarrassing?" Akira tried, feeling nervous again.

"No," Akechi studied him for a moment. It was difficult to tell what he was thinking, "What say we go cool off?"

"Cool off?"

"Go for a walk," Akechi clarified, "I'm feeling a bit hot and restless now. Don't you agree?"

Yeah, Akira certainly felt hot about the collar, and going out for a walk with Akechi sounded leagues better than sitting here stewing in mortification of what had almost happened. Fighting the urge to fidget with his hair, the both of them quickly finished off the drinks and stood up. Akechi, for some reason, stood quite close against his side, gently urging him towards the stairs with a light touch to his lower back.

Akira was *painfully* aware of it.

Akechi had to let go when they reached the stairs, and when they stepped out into the cool night air of Kichijoji, Akira almost startled when Akechi tugged on his arm, guiding him towards the narrow streets crammed tight with late night salarymen and ramen bars.

“It seems,” Akechi murmured, his hand resting on Akira’s wrist, fingers lightly squeezing, “we have tagalongs.”

“What?” Akira said a bit dumbly, too distracted to really parse the mischievous look Akechi was giving him. Where was the blushing, wide-eyed Goro from before? “Who?”

Akechi rolled his eyes, “Who do you think?”

Akira was a bit mystified, but fought the urge to look over his shoulder. Akechi was walking with purpose, clearly had something in mind, and Akira was helplessly swept up in his momentum. For now, Akechi was leading the competition, and Akira had to wait until an opportunity showed itself to seize control.

They squeezed close together when they entered the narrow street, the smell of food making his stomach gurgle as they navigated around drunken adults or dressed up groups of friends, sweat prickling the back of his neck from the sudden spike of heat. He was just - *aware* of Akechi’s hand on his wrist, the press of his body against his side, briefly getting lost because he wasn’t paying attention to where they were going. Everything was just an overwhelming press of bodies, heat and sound until Akechi finally tugged them into a quiet side alley.

“Shh,” Akechi hushed him when he opened his mouth, tugging him deeper into the alley, further from the entrance, and cast an amused look over his shoulder, “I think we lost them.”

Akira finally glanced over his shoulder. People walked by, but he didn’t see anyone familiar - until he saw a familiar glimpse, four people passing the alleyway in a heated discussion with each other, vanishing without spotting them, too quickly for Akira to properly process their faces until a few seconds after they were gone.

Ryuji. Ann. Yusuke. *Makoto*.

Akira’s stomach knotted up, and he wasn’t sure *what* he felt. His friends spied on his date? Shit, they knew it was Akechi- *shit*, that’s why Ryuji asked where he was going, and- they must’ve seen him attempting to kiss Akechi, so Ryuji sent that text on *purpose* -

“I wonder who your friends don’t trust,” Akechi said conversationally, “Me, or you?”

Akira sighed heavily, his shoulders slumping as he pulled away from Akechi, leaning his back against the wall, “When did you notice them?”

“After your phone interrupted us,” Akechi answered. The alleyway was dark, the light from the street casting a soft glow against the side of his face. Akira couldn’t read his expression, “Are you angry?”

Well, kind of, but Akira will deal with that *later*. He felt jittery, some strange nervousness swallowing up his insides as Akechi stood opposite him - close, though, close enough to touch, looming over him because he was slightly taller, his expression perfectly unreadable as he watched him with those dark eyes.

Akira reached out, his fingers pinching the front of Akechi’s shirt. He pulled lightly.

Akechi obeyed the silent command, stepping close enough that he was almost standing on his toes. The tension that crept over their previous encounters was back with a vengeance, almost buzzing as Akira straightened up from his slouch against the wall, his nose almost bumping against Akechi’s.

This wasn’t like before, where everything had been soft and fragile. This was *something else*, and Akira found himself missing that moment back in the club. Akechi’s eyes were guarded, his smile less crooked, more Detective Prince. Akira wanted it gone.

“Goro,” he murmured, feeling his lips quirk into a grin when Akechi’s focus on him *sharpened*, pupils dilating. Ah, there it is, “Come here.”

Akechi hesitated, a fraction.

“Please,” Akira added, softly.

Akechi leaned in.

It was... tentative. Their lips barely touched, but every nerve in Akira’s body felt electrified in response to it. His heart was pounding in his throat, and Akira became bolder - had to seize control - winding his arms around Akechi’s shoulders and squeezing, pulling him closer, and Akechi acquiesced with a soft noise exhaled against his mouth. He felt hands flutter against his waist, his hips, uncertain on where to touch.

“Goro,” Akira murmured against his mouth, smiled into the kiss when Akechi made a *noise* in response. He liked that noise, “Put your hands on my hips.”

Akechi did. He gripped them *tight*. Akira bit and sucked his bottom lip as a reward and something quivered and *snapped* between them.

A low, rumbling noise, and Akechi *kissed* him - firm, hard, hungry, his body pushing up against his, Akira gasping from the sudden aggressiveness. The control he had snatched back was wrenched away just as quickly, but he found himself quickly not caring, fingers twisting and curling into the collar of Akechi’s shirt as all the air was kissed out of him. He felt woozy

when it ended, Akechi resting his forehead against his, breathing hard, lips tingling with a dull ache that warned of later bruising.

“Oh,” Akira mumbled a bit stupidly, “Nice.”

Akechi chuckled. It practically rumbled in his chest. Akira’s soul left his body for a brief moment; “Eloquent.”

“I’ll... think of a better word later,” Akira mumbled, easing his death grip on the back of Akechi’s shirt, shifting his hand to slip his fingers into his hair instead. Akechi was watching him with heavy-lidded eyes.

“Was this your plan?” Akira asked when a long silence lapsed between them, filled with nothing but their uneven breaths and a held gaze, “Pulling me into an alleyway and ravishing me?”

“You instigated,” Akechi said immediately - and leaned in. The tender, barely there kiss had Akira trembling right down to his curling toes. Fuck, “Did you dislike it?”

“Far from it,” Akira rasped, trembling again when Akechi kissed the corner of his mouth next. So close, he could feel his eyelashes tickle his cheek, “I...”

“Mm?” A kiss to the other corner of his mouth.

Akira croaked some noise out, his resolve quickly crumbling away from this relentless, gentle attack. He had underestimated Akechi, he realised dizzily, hadn’t thought him capable of this soft, intimate domination that made his knees weak. Akira was losing the competition, and he was almost doing it willingly.

“Use your words, *Akira*, ” Akechi ordered, softly, very very softly, against his mouth.

god.

“I... liked it,” Akira gasped out, shuddering when Akechi rewarded him by firmly squeezing his hips - and pulled away.

He whined before he could stop himself, but Akechi didn’t move far, still trapped into his arms and smiling down at him with that air of smug, self-satisfaction. Akira felt like a mess, was sure he *looked* like a mess, and Akechi was looking down at him with a crooked smile, his eyes dark and hungry and *triumphant*.

Akira desperately wanted to kiss that look off his face.

But Akechi had the advantage, Akira was scrambling for composure, and the only thing he could think of was to lean *hard* into his loss. Akechi was quietly gloating because he made Akira a mess? Fine. Akira will return the favour. If he can’t win, force a draw.

go down with me, he thought with a heart-pounding thrill, tightening his grip into Akechi’s shirt collar.

“Goro,” he murmured, darkly pleased when he *felt* Akechi focus on him - that name was his weak spot, and Akira exploited it to the hilt, “ *Goro* .”

“Mm?” Akechi unconsciously leaned in, enthralled by his own name, and Akira had to bite the side of his lip to stem a Joker’s grin at how easy that was.

“I want you to kiss me again,” he whispered, and Akechi hummed quietly at that, consideringly, like he was tempted to tease him by saying ‘*no*’, so Akira added a soft, desperate “*please*,” arching his back a little-

Akechi kissed him greedily.

got you.

Akira was ready this time. He met the demanding kiss with pliant eagerness, one hand trailing over Akechi’s shoulder, slipping between them, fingers curling into the shirt and untucking it, until he felt warm skin against his palm, sweeping his hand along the curve under his rib cage until it settled on his lower back.

Akechi made *a noise*. Akira’s satisfaction purred.

He dug his fingernails in.

“*kira*,” Akechi rasped against his mouth, and, *oh*, Akira liked *that* better. He hummed, and licked his way into Akechi’s mouth, dragging his nails up along the curve of Akechi’s lower back, slowly, meticulously, feeling his hands tighten around his hips to near bruising levels. The balance of power was shifting. Akechi whined.

Akira broke the kiss to breathe, chuckling quietly when Akechi immediately chased after his mouth with a displeased noise. This was - *definitely* what Akira wanted. Peeling back the nice controlled layers Akechi used to guard himself, kissing him stupid, very stupid; Akechi was getting this very dazed look on his face that was *cute* and Akira was feeling very smug now, very pleased and confident, deftly evading another kiss to press his lips against Akechi’s throat instead. He smelled like that floral cologne, and beneath that, musk.

Heat coiled hot and tight in his belly, an urge to *bite* rising in him, and Akira knew they had to stop. Making out in an alleyway was one thing, but he wasn’t... ready for anything more than that just yet.

“Okay,” he panted against Akechi’s neck, feeling him shiver against him, “I think, we should stop.”

Akechi went still, and for a brief moment Akira was worried he had taken it the wrong way, before he eased against him, his weight pressing Akira firmly against the wall as his cheek pressed against his hair. He exhaled heavily.

“I agree,” Akechi said, his voice delightfully rough, “We got... carried away.”

Reluctantly, they untangled from each other, standing on slightly weak legs as they... adjusted themselves. Akira tried to think of Sojiro in a bikini to banish the tightness in his

jeans. It worked at the cost of leaving him with a cursed mental image.

sorry, boss, Akira thought with a grimace, repressing that image to never see the light of day again.

Akechi wasn't quite looking at him, holding himself stiffly as he tucked his shirt back into his trousers. A flush was high on his cheeks, and he still looked partly dazed, mouth red and kiss-swollen. Akira clamped down on the flutter of lust that made him want to cup his cheeks and kiss him again, and thought - fuck it, the game is still running, why not.

So he did. He stepped close, scuffing his heel against the floor to draw Akechi's attention. Those dark eyes caught his, and Akechi looked... Akira wasn't sure. There was no mask he was hiding behind, something vulnerable and guarded in his expression; yet Akechi didn't retreat when Akira slowly reached out, cupping his face between his hands and drawing him in close to kiss that bruised mouth.

"I think," Akira said quietly as he pulled away, "that counts as a tie."

Akechi smiled crookedly, "I almost had you."

"Still a tie," Akira insisted, pressing his thumb against Akechi's bottom lip, watching his long eyelashes flutter a little at the pressure.

Akechi watched him for a long moment.

"A tie, then," he finally agreed, voice barely audible.

Akira let him go, his fingers skimming along the edges of Akechi's thoroughly rumpled collar in a vain effort to straighten it out, "So, what now?"

"We can actually have this date we are meant to be on?" Akechi suggested with a sliver of sarcasm, "Before your friends, mm, gatecrashed."

Akira had almost forgotten about that, "Right. Yeah."

"Unless," Akechi's tone dropped a little, and those walls were creeping up, his crooked smile evening out into something less sincere, "This was all you wanted from tonight?"

"What?" Was he seriously suggesting- "I came here for a date, not to make out with you."

Akechi's gaze lowered. That odd smile didn't waver; "Oh?"

"Yeah," Akira said, tucking his hands into his pockets and tapping the toe of his shoe against the floor, "I, uh, thought we'd be going slower than... this. So."

Akechi was quiet, peering up at him from beneath his eyelashes.

"So," Akira tried again, the nerves from earlier rushing in now that they were out of the comfortable lines of a simple competition, "We can... go back to the club if you want, or, somewhere else? It's up to you."

Akechi's smile became genuine and he lifted his head. Akira breathed a sigh of relief.

"Well, if it's up to me," Akechi tucked a lock of hair behind his ear, "Billiards?"

"Is the bar open this late?"

"Yes, though it is a little pricier," Akechi admitted, "I can pay our way."

Akira wasn't going to protest that - his wallet was still hurting from restocking the team's medicine bag after Kaneshiro's Palace. He felt himself relax too, since billiards was *normal* for them. They might get a few looks walking in there all dressed up, but it sounded like a nice way to wind down from the excitement of tonight.

"It's a date," Akira said, perfectly straight faced.

The look Akechi gave him was fond. Akira had a feeling he didn't realise he was doing it.

"I certainly hope so at this point," Akechi muttered, and took his wrist before leading him from the alleyway.

And, feeling bold, Akira tugged his wrist free when they stepped into the narrow street, snagging Akechi's hand instead. His rival froze for the shortest of seconds, his shoulders going tense... before relaxing, his face slightly turned away to hide his expression. But that was fine.

Akechi didn't pull away.

End Notes

i typed this in almost one sitting i hope you appreciate my sacrifice

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